Access
News on WCB products, programs, and services
June 2002

NEW LEGISLATION

# Changes to the *Workers Compensation Act*

On May 13, 2002, the provincial government introduced Bill 49, *Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2002*. The government has indicated that the legislation will become effective on June 30, 2002.

Changes to the Act will apply mainly to those workers who have a new injury after the legislation comes into effect. Most people already receiving benefits will not be affected by these changes. However, if a worker has a recurrence of disability or a worker's permanent disability first occurs on or after June 30, 2002, some of the new provisions will apply.

Under the proposed legislation, there will be changes to the *Workers Compensation Act* in these areas:

- Compensation benefits
- Inflation adjustment
- Benefits for permanent disability
- Mental stress claims
- Governing structure

The government has indicated it will also introduce another bill dealing with the WCB appeals process.

Another group of issues including occupational disease compensation, survivor benefits, compensation for chronic pain, and regulation of occupational health and safety will require more work and/or consultation before legislative change. Legislation covering these topics may be introduced in the fall of 2002 or spring of 2003.

The WCB *Guide to the Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2002* can be downloaded from **www.worksafebc.com**, or printed copies can be obtained free of charge from WCB Publications and Videos. To order, call WCB Publications and Videos at **604 276-3068** (toll-free in B.C. at **1 800 661-2112, local 3068**), fax **604 279-7406**, or e-mail **pubvid@wcb.bc.ca**.

For additional information about the *Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2002*, visit the WCB web site at **www.worksafebc.com** and the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour web site at **www.labour.gov.bc.ca**.

# Online services provide added convenience

The WCB has introduced a host of self-serve e-business applications that make it quicker and easier for you to do business with the Board.

Online access to clearance letters has already proven popular, and now Employer Self-Serve Registration is changing the way many employers can register with the WCB.

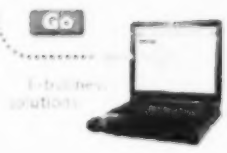
This June, the WCB's Internet rate site will be expanded to offer an enhanced classification search engine, a convenient online premium calculator, a new experience rating calculator, information on rate group trends, scorecards grading a rate group's overall performance, plus improved navigation and content. In the future, you will be able to log on to the site to receive information specific to your rate and account.

The next application to be released is online payroll and reporting, which will give you the option of making payments and sending remittance reports to the WCB over the Internet. Online annual rate notifications will become available later this year, and in 2003 the WCB will launch online statements of account, claim cost statements, and account maintenance tools.

These features will add to the WCB's current array of e-business applications, including the Health and Safety Centre, an online resource for injury prevention information, and the Incident and Injury Report, which lets you submit all workplace incident and injury data in one consolidated online report.

In the future, you will be able to manage your entire account lifecycle online. You will be able to report payroll, pay premiums, review statements, view and calculate rate information, and update account information, all through the Internet.

For more information, visit the "Online Services" section of our web site at **www.worksafebc.com/online_services/**



## Partnership aims to simplify registering a business in B.C.

Have you ever wished you could go to one place, at one time, to fulfill your business registration needs? Thanks to a proposed partnership under discussion among the WCB, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), and a number of B.C. public agencies, you may soon be able to do just that.

Once the partnership is implemented, the CCRA will assign a Business Number to all WCB employer accounts that have payroll. You will see your Business Number, along with your WCB account number, on your Employer's Payroll and Contract Labour Report (Form 1810) later this year. CCRA representatives may contact your firm if they don't have enough information to assign your Business Number.

In the future, you'll be able to use your Business Number to go online and register with various business-related public agencies in one step, significantly reducing the time you spend on administrative functions, and making it much easier to start or expand a business in B.C. The initiative will also raise awareness of WCB registration requirements, which will help ensure that all employers pay their fair share of the system. This second phase, known as the Single Business Number Initiative, is planned to be in place sometime next year. Similar initiatives are already in place in Ontario and Nova Scotia, and are underway in other provinces.

The WCB's proposed partnership with the CCRA meets the privacy requirements under provincial and federal legislation.

You can find more information on the proposed partnership on our web site at **www.worksafebc.com**.

## New publication distribution policy

The WCB supplies health and safety information free of charge on our WorkSafe Online web site. Employers and workers are encouraged to download and print this information as required.

In the past, the WCB also provided free printed versions of these materials upon request, but due to high costs, this service is no longer sustainable. As a result, health and safety publications ordered from the Board will now carry a minimal charge to help cover production, shipping, and handling.

Most health and safety posters and pamphlets are available for 35 cents or less. Booklets, stickers, and other materials cost slightly more depending on their size. All publications about the Board's products and services remain free of charge.

For a listing of our publications, visit the "Publications" section of our web site at **www.worksafebc.com/Publications/**, or contact Publications and Videos at **604 276-3068** (toll-free in B.C. at **1 800 661-2112**, local **3068**), fax **604 279-7406**, or e-mail **pubvid@wcb.bc.ca**.

If you have any questions about this change, contact Jim McGowan, manager of Print Production and Distribution, at **604 276-3143**, or e-mail **jmcgowan@wcb.bc.ca**.

## Set up a secured online account

WorkSafe

The WCB's suite of e-business applications is growing rapidly, giving you access to account information and injury reporting tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In order to take advantage of upcoming features, including online rate notifications and payroll reporting and remitting, you will need to set up a secured online account.

Before applying for a secured account, choose a representative to be your firm's online contact (organization administrator). If your administrator is someone other than yourself, be sure the person is privileged to view your confidential WCB-related information (such as your premiums, experience rating, claim costs, and injuries to workers) and has the authority to approve access for users on behalf of your organization.

Your organization administrator will need to supply information that is unique to your firm's account. If you registered with the WCB online after March 11, 2002, your administrator should have your Internet Registration Confirmation Number (IRCN).

If you don't have an IRCN, your organization administrator will need a recent copy of your Employer's Payroll and Contract Labour Report, or Employer's Remittance Form, and a copy of your Annual Rate Notification letter, or a Rate Recalculation letter. These documents must have been issued within the last 24 months in order to match our records.

When this information is ready, your organization administrator can set up your secured online account by visiting the WCB web site at **www.worksafebc.com**, selecting "Login" from the home page, then "Sign Up" from the left-hand side of the screen.

## Advisory committee helps WCB meet customer needs

The WCB has formed a new committee to help our Assessment and Revenue Services departments become more customer-focused. The Employer Services Advisory Committee, comprising 11 members from a cross-section of industries, will meet quarterly with the WCB to provide feedback on the departments' products and services, and to discuss new strategies and initiatives that affect employers.

At the committee's first meeting on April 3, committee members received a demonstration of the WCB's Employer Self-Serve Registration application and discussed upcoming initiatives between the WCB and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. The committee meets again on June 19 to explore the initiatives in greater detail, and discuss online payroll reporting and remitting for employers.

Access

JUNE 2002

Access is published quarterly by the Communications Services Department of the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.

This newsletter is also available electronically on the WCB web site at **www.worksafebc.com/publications/newsletters/access/**

Look for the next issue in September 2002.

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Communications Services
Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.
PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal
Vancouver BC V6B 5L5